

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05

/099 W

-----054540 021856Z /43

O 021710Z JUN 78 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8734

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

USINTS HAVANA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 6852

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CG, NI, CU, UR

SUBJECT: TALKING POINTS ON US INVOLVEMENT IN SHABA

REF: (A) STATE 139677, (B) LAGOS 6795, (C) LAGOS 6833

1. SUMMARY. COMMENTS OF MEA OFFICIALS TO THE CHARGE
ON JUNE 2 IN RESPONSE TO THE TALKING POINTS SET FORTH
IN REFTTEL A INDICATED THAT THE FMG WOULD NOT WELCOME
AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE FOR THE DEFENSE OF SHABA
WHICH WAS ORGANIZED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE FRENCH
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OR OF THE WEST. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT THE FMG
COULD SUPPORT SUCH A FORCE IF IT WERE ORGANIZED
UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OAU, EVEN THOUGH ITS LOGISTICAL
SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED BY THE WEST. THE SUGGESTION WAS
ADVANCED THAT MOBUTU DISCUSS WITH BONGO THE BEST WAY
OF BRINGING THE OAU INTO THE ACT. THE COMMENTS OF
MEA OFFICIALS REFLECTED SOME UNDERSTANDING OF US

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF THE FRENCH-BELGIAN RESCUE
OPERATION IN SHABA DESPITE THEIR DISTASTE FOR THAT
OPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH MEA'S AFRICA DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR AKADIRI
BEING UNAVAILABLE AT THE TIME, CHARGE ON JUNE 2 DIS-
CUSSED THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UPCOMING JUNE 5
PARIS MEETING ALONG THE LINES OF REFTTEL WITH DR.
FAFOWARA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THAT DEPARTMENT.
FAFOWARA SAID THAT HE WOULD PASS THE INFORMATION TO
HIGHER AUTHORITY. HE ADDED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE
COULDN'T REALLY SPEAK OFFICIALLY FOR HIS GOVERNMENT,
HE WAS VERY DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE FMG WOULD LOOK
FAVORABLY UPON THE TYPE OF INTER-AFRICAN DEFENSE
FORCE FOR SHABA PROPOSED BY THE FRENCH. HE SAID
THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION IN THE FMG RE-
GARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFORMING THAT PROPOSAL
FOR THE BETTER BY ORGANIZING AN OAU INTER-AFRICAN FORCE.

3. CHARGE EMPHASIZED TO FAFOWARA THAT THE USG WOULD
BE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IF THE FMG WISHED TO PROVIDE
ITS OFFICIAL VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT TO THE EMBASSY.

4. CHARGE THEN CALLED ON BRONSON DEDE, THE PERSONAL
ASSISTANT OF COMMISSIONER GARBA, AND WENT OVER THE
SAME TALKING POINTS. DEDE SAID HE WOULD PASS THEM
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ON TO THE COMMISSIONER, WHO WOULD BE LEAVING LAGOS
JUNE 5 TO ACCOMPANY OBASANJO ON HIS VISITS TO WARSAW
AND BUCHAREST.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LAGOS 6852

5. DEDE COMMENTED THAT THE FRENCH HAD LONG HAD IN MIND THE IDEA OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE SUPPORTED BY FRANCE WHICH COULD DEAL WITH SITUATIONS SUCH AS SHABA THROUGHOUT AFRICA. THE FMG HAS LONG TAKEN A DIM VIEW OF FRENCH INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD AND GARBA TOLD THE FRENCH PRESIDENT SO LAST YEAR IN PARIS. DEDE SAID THE FMG HAS NOT CHANGED IN THIS REGARD AND THAT IT STILL CANNOT WELCOME THE CREATION OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE UNDER FRENCH AEGIS. THERE WOULD BE A GREAT DOMESTIC POLITICAL OUTCRY IF IT ATTEMPTED TO DO SO.

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6. WHEN THE CHARGE INQUIRED WHETHER THIS WOULD BE TRUE OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE UNDER WESTERN RATHER THAN FRENCH AEGIS, DEDE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT SO. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE THE WESTERN AEGIS WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE, NOT THE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FROM THE WEST WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO BACK UP ANY INTER-AFRICAN FORCE.

7. DEDE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY NIGERIA IF IT OPERATED "SOMEHOW UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OAU." WHEN THE CHARGE EXPRESSED SOME DOUBTS WHETHER THIS COULD IN FACT BE ARRANGED, DEDE CONTENTED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT BUT NEVERTHELESS POSSIBLE. HE COULD NOT HIMSELF DESCRIBE JUST HOW IT COULD BE DONE BUT HE SUGGESTED IN THIS REGARD THAT MOBUTU SEEK ADVICE FROM BONGO AS TO HOW IT COULD BE

ARRANGED.

8. DEDE SAID THE FMG UNDERSTOOD THE HUMANITARIAN REASONS WHY THE USG HAD PROVIDED LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE BELGIAN-FRENCH OPERATION IN SHABA AND THAT GARBA HAD TAKEN THAT INTO ACCOUNT IN HIS MAY 30 BBC INTERVIEW.

9. AT ONE POINT IN THE CONVERSATION DEDE POPPED INTO GARBA'S OFFICE FOR A MINUTE OR SO. WHEN HE RETURNED HE SAID HE HAD MENTIONED THE ONGOING CONVERSATION TO GARBA AND THAT GRABA HAD COMMENTED THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO PLACE ANY INTER-AFRICAN FORCE FOR SHABA UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OAU.

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10. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT THE COMMENTS MADE BY FAFOWARA AND DEDE ACCORD WELL WITH THE POSITION WHICH OBASANJO RECENTLY TOOK WITH MOBUTU'S SPECIAL ENVOY (REFTEL B) AND THE REMARKS WHICH GARBA MADE ON MAY 30 IN A BBC-TV INTERVIEW (REFTEL C).

11. NEITHER FAFOWARA NOR DEDE EXPRESSED IRRITATION THAT THE US WAS GIVING SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE FRENCH PROPOSAL. BOTH OF THEM DISPLAYED INTEREST WHETHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN FRANCOPHONE ONES WOULD PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A FORCE AND BOTH OF THEM OBVIOUSLY HOPED THAT THE US WOULD USE ITS INFLUENCE TO BROADEN THE CONCEPT OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE FOR SHABA WELL BEYOND THE PREVIOUS THINKING OF THE FRENCH AND THE FRANCOPHONE STATES.
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